



Investing in Spiritual Growth

Read: Luke 16:19-31

In the gospel Jesus tells the story of the rich man and Lazarus. The rich man refused to be generous with his material wealth. By doing so he deprived himself of the spiritual rewards God had planned for him. Jesus warns that if we have riches but fail to be generous with them, we are depriving ourselves of the chance to grow spiritually.

Money is hard to part with. It brings security and freedom, so giving it away can be a risk. Jesus says that the greatest obstacle to putting faith and trust in God is money. Wealth represents the greatest competition that God has for our hearts. This is evident from the gospel narrative. Therefore, nothing grows our faith in God like giving. When we are generous, we release control, freeing our hearts to trust more faithfully in God and not in our own abilities.

When we are generous with God, he increases the fruits of the Spirit in our lives, specifically, "generosity, kindness and joy" (Galatians 5:22). In fact, Jesus says that a disciple bears good fruit (John 15:8). If we don't enact generosity in our lives, we are depriving ourselves of the spiritual benefits it provides, much like the rich man in the gospel.

Jesus wants us to recognize that wealth is a blessing from God, but without God it is impossible to see money and possessions in the right way. Without God we look to money to provide meaning for our lives and begin to trust it more than we trust in God. Money is so powerful that it can take God's place and distract us from the good works that God is calling us to do. Therefore, we need to see our money and possessions as gifts from God and be generous with them. We must use them to honour, worship and serve the giver. If not, our possessions can consume our lives and distract us from our true purpose, which is to be a disciple of Jesus.